

Musicians and poets join together for Untold Stories

David Whetstone

January 29, 2011

HOLOCAUST survivors will be joined in Newcastle tomorrow by musicians and poets in Untold Stories, a moving event in the same week as Holocaust Memorial Day.

One speaker at the event at The Journal Tyne Theatre will be Youk Chhang who survived the “killing fields” of Cambodia when 1.7 million people died at the hands of the Khmer Rouge.

Youk Chhang was 14 when the Khmer Rouge began their four-year reign of terror in 1975 and was put to work in the paddy fields where people died every day.

Food and death, he has recalled, became his twin obsessions.

He now runs the Documentation Centre of Cambodia which has built up an extensive archive of documents, photos and films relating to the Khmer Rouge rule.

In the spirit of reconciliation, he has concluded that he could easily have been sucked into the Khmer Rouge killing machine as others of his age were.

Also due to speak tomorrow is Eva Clarke whose mother, Anka, spent the nine months of her pregnancy in Auschwitz concentration camp and gave birth after being transferred to another camp, Mauthausen, on a coal truck.

Eva was born on April 29, 1945, three days before the Americans liberated the camp and days after her father, a German-Jewish architect, was shot. He hadn't even known Anka was pregnant. Eva's mother survived the war.

Also due to speak are Manchester-based Jewish refugee Peter Kurer, whose family were saved from the Nazis by British Quakers, and Prof Roberta Greene of the University of Texas, who has worked with Holocaust survivors.

Violinist Bradley Creswick, singer Katie Doherty and the Hotspur Children's Choir will perform at the event tomorrow and there will be readings from *The Galloping Stone*, an anthology of poems by Gillian Allnut and clients, staff and volunteers from the Medical Foundation for the Care of the Victims of Torture.

Holocaust Memorial Day coincides with the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp on January 27, 1945, and commemorates all victims of genocide.

Untold Stories, which takes place at 3pm, is free but you must register via www.hmd.org.uk/event